Office of Environmental Health & Safety

Annual Report 2001





About OEH&S and This Report

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) includes a variety of programs providing a wide range of activities including technical assistance, training, health education, surveillance, and investigations. Programs are designed to complement and support activities of local health jurisdictions, and other agencies and organizations involved in delivery of public health services.

This third annual report summarizes OEHS activities for the year 2001 and includes a few of the major program accomplishments. We are continuing to expand collaboration with our partners to maintain current programs while responding to emerging issues. One example of this is the recent publication of the "*K-12 School Health and Safety Guide*" sponsored jointly with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This effort was only possible through the hard work of many stakeholders, including state, local, and federal agencies, as well as citizen groups. Similar efforts are ongoing in all our programs. These partnerships are essential in maintaining a high level of activity in small state programs.

Future challenges include such things as bioterrorism planning, increasing awareness of indoor air issues, responding to emerging diseases and maintaining current programs in a time of limited resources. In order to meet these challenges we will be expanding our partnerships, seeking additional sources of funding, and expanding the use of electronic communication. I encourage your comments on this report or ideas on how we can continue to improve our services.

Maryanne Guichard Director

The Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of people in Washington State

For more information or additional copies of this report contact:

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Internet: http://www/doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/

Clandestine Drug Lab Program

Program Description

The Clandestine Drug Lab Program certifies drug lab clean-up workers, supervisors, and firms and provides technical assistance and training to local health jurisdictions, other agencies, and the public on safety and health issues related to clandestine drug labs.

Highlights

- Completed development of clean-up standards for methamphetamine, lead, mercury and volatile organic compounds for inclusion in the clandestine drug lab regulation.
- Developed draft guidelines for asbestos, septic tanks and vehicles at drug lab sites in cooperation with other state and local agencies.
- Participated on the Methamphetamine Task Force to develop a comprehensive approach to methamphetamine related issues.
- Held four certification courses for drug lab clean-up personnel and one refresher course for local health staff, laboratories and clean-up workers.



For Additional Program Information Contact

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Hazardous Substances Emergency Event Surveillance

Program Description

The Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance Program (HSEES) collects and analyzes data on uncontrolled, illegal, or threatened releases of non-petroleum hazardous substances. Reports are generated which describe the distribution and number of hazardous emissions and injuries related to these events for use in planning for emergency events, training first responders, and to reduce future injuries.

Washington is one of 16 states funded by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to conduct these activities.

Highlights

- Data from 439 statewide hazardous substances spill events were analyzed in the year 2000. This included 180 events in which 469 people were injured as well as 119 events in which 12, 049 people were evacuated.
- Staff made presentations of HSEES data to the Washington State University Environmental Health and Community Planning, University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, and the Partners in Preparedness Conference. Staff provided drug lab prevention training in collaboration with the DOH Drug Lab Program and the Washington State Patrol. Data was provided upon request to local health jurisdictions, state agencies, and industry. HSEES data from Washington and Oregon were presented at the Western Regional Epidemiology Network meeting in Oregon.
- In collaboration with Dr. Jeffery L. Burgess, University of Washington published an article in the *Annuals of Emergency Medicine* entitled, "Hazardous Materials Events: Evaluation of Transport to Health Care Facility and Evacuation Decisions."

For Additional Program Information Contact

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Indoor Air Quality Program

Program Description

The Indoor Air Quality Program provides technical assistance to local health jurisdictions, other agencies, school districts, and the public on recognition, remediation, and control of indoor air contaminates such as mold, asbestos, and formaldehyde.

Highlights

- Assisted the Everett School District and Spokane Educational Service District develop comprehensive indoor air quality programs. Both organizations received national recognition by EPA for excellence in the programs they established.
- Developed web page information for homeowners on home insulation containing asbestos (vermiculite). Also provided information on the internet on hazardous necklaces with breakable mercury pendants.
- Began a series of indoor air quality presentations for educational service districts statewide in cooperation with the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction.
- Assisted local health jurisdictions and school districts investigate and resolve indoor air quality problems related to mold, asbestos and volatile organic compounds.

For Additional Program Information Contact

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Pesticide and Surveillance Program

Program Description

The Pesticide and Surveillance Program conducts investigations of suspected pesticide poisonings to determine their nature and cause. It makes recommendations to regulatory agencies to prevent reoccurrences, provides consultation to the public, and conducts educational outreach activities. The program investigates exposures to pesticides in occupational, non-occupational, agricultural and non-agricultural settings.

Highlights

- Our Health Provider Education Specialist, Toxicologist and Investigative staff participated in numerous community outreach/education/activities including:
- Staffed booth for the Bellingham Migrant Appreciation Day.
- Provided Pesticide Safety Information at WSU Cooperative Extension applicator recertification classes.
- Meet with Harrison Memorial Hospital Emergency Department staff.
- Safety presentation for Hispanic farm workers at Moses Lake.
- Presentations to School Nurses of Washington and Yakima Valley Community College nursing program.
- Presentation at Joint Public Health Conference and Washington State Environmental Health Association.
- Pesticide Safety presentation for Teenagers at Yakima chapter of the American Lung Association.
- Safety Presentation for WA State Christmas Tree Growers Association.
- Conducted health surveillance activities involving the 2000 Asian Gypsy Moth Spraying in Seattle.
- Participated in EPA workgroup "Inert Disclosure Stakeholder Workgroup"
- Investigated 313 suspected pesticide illness reports in 2000. Eastern Washington accounted for 219 reports (70 %) and western Washington 94.
- Produced a Lindane fact sheet available at: http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/pubs.htm#Pesticide

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PIRT Panel

Program Description

The PIRT (Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking) Review Panel, established by the 1989 Washington State Legislature, to see that agencies coordinate their activities to ensure timely response to concerns about health and environmental impacts of pesticide use and misuse. The Panel, chaired and staffed by DOH has the responsibility to identify inadequacies in state and/or federal law that result in insufficient protection of public health and safety from pesticide use or misuse.

Highlights

- Prepared the 2001-2002 PIRT Review Panel Annual Report detailing the extent of pesticide incident reporting and investigation in Washington State. Incidents reported and investigated in 1999 by four agencies and the Washington Poison Center are evaluated. The report also contains a five-year analysis (1995-1999) of each agencies pesticide incidents with identification of consistently high-risk use activities. The report is available through the Washington State Department of Health home page at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/pirt.htm
- Published the five-year analysis (1995-1999) of pesticide incidents investigated by DOH, in "Agrichemical and Environmental News", a monthly newsletter of the WSU Cooperative Extension. The two articles discuss the 1,818 incidents involving 2,246 individuals investigated by DOH during this time period.
- Met monthly with panel members from the six state agencies, the UW, WSU, WPC and others to coordinate activities related to the evaluation of incident data and dissemination of this information for the prevention of future pesticide incidents.

Most Recent Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking (PIRT) Annual Report can be found at: http://www.doh.wa.gov/Publicat/Pulications. htm#Reports Published by Department of Health

For Additional Program Information Contact

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School Health and Safety Program

Program Description

The School Health and Safety Program provides technical assistance to local health jurisdictions, schools, and the public on safety and health issues related to school buildings, playgrounds, laboratories, shops, and athletic facilities.

Highlights

- Completed and distributed the School Health and Safety Guidelines in cooperation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Held workshops with school district staff and local health jurisdictions to begin implementation of the guidelines.
- Conducted workshops with OSPI, Pacific Lutheran University, school district staff, local health jurisdictions, federal agencies, and other interested parties to prioritize health and safety issues in schools. Established a program to focus on the priority issues including removal of dangerous chemicals from schools, improving indoor air quality and promoting improved construction, operation and maintenance practices.
- Assisted OSPI in developing criteria for the allocation of \$10.3 million to school districts for renovation projects which resulted in an emphasis on health and safety issues.
- Participated in establishing a program to train science teachers on health and safety issues through a grant administered by Pacific Lutheran University.



For Additional Program Information Contact

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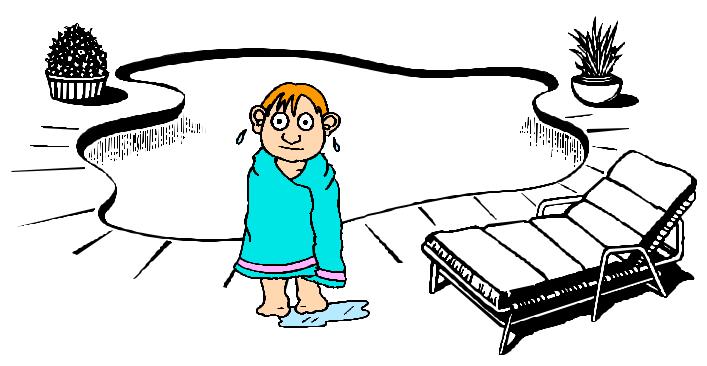
Water Recreation Program

Program Description

The Water Recreation Program provides technical assistance and training to local health jurisdictions and water recreation facility designers and operators on safety and health issues related to the design, operation, and maintenance of pools, spas, water parks, and bathing beaches. Budget reductions, which have reduced activity in this program to half-time, have necessitated a focus on the most critical public health issues.

Highlights

- Continued work on revision of the Water Recreation Facilities regulation to update requirements and streamline language.
- Assisted local health jurisdictions and industry associations in providing health and safety training for pool operators in several locations statewide.
- Prepared and distributed a Resource Guide on Recreational Waters and Beaches that includes a model for use in developing local ordinances.



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Wastewater Management Program

Program Description

The Wastewater Management Program assists local health jurisdictions in the protection of public health by promoting the safe treatment and disposal of domestic and other non-industrial wastewater in areas of Washington not served by municipal sewage treatment works.

Highlights

- Completed work with the On-Site Advisory Committee. This group reviewed the wastewater program and made recommendations to DOH for short-term and long-term direction of this program. Among their priorities were Initiatives for Operation & Maintenance, Rule Development, and Funding.
- Began the process of rule development with the State Board of Health, recognizing that implementing many of the priority recommendations of the OAC is contingent on the development and revision of on-site sewage system rules.
- Continued the partnership with the Washington On-Site Sewage Association, Washington State University, and Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team staff in the delivery of broad-based technical training curricula at the Northwest On-Site Wastewater Training Center.
- Surveyed over 250 sites to observe use and installation patterns for mounds and Glendon BioFilters. This field activity provided valuable information regarding "real life" application of these technologies. This insight has been instrumental in revising the Recommended Standards & Guidance for Glendon BioFilters
- Continued working with the Technical Review committee, in the revision of existing and development of new technical Recommended Standards and Guidance documents.

For Additional Program Information Contact

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Zoonotic Disease Program

Program Description

The Zoonotic Disease Program provides technical assistance and training to local health jurisdictions, veterinarians, state and federal agencies, physicians, and the public on transmission, epidemiology, prevention, and control of diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

Highlights

- Investigated two salmonella outbreaks associated with cats in veterinary clinics and an E.coli 0157:H7 outbreak at a petting zoo. CDC published articles on both outbreaks in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.
- Developed and distributed environmental health guidelines for petting zoos to prevent outbreaks related to agents such as E.coli 0157:H7 and salmonella from domestic animals.
- Initiated mosquito surveillance activities in cooperation with local health jurisdictions and mosquito control districts under the CDC grant for West Nile virus surveillance.
- Prepared and distributed public informational materials on prevention of tickborne diseases and mosquito habitat reduction and bite prevention for homeowners.
- Conducted four workshops on rabies and mosquito-borne disease surveillance for local health jurisdictions, mosquito control districts and other interested parties.
- Held meetings with the State Veterinary Medical Association and local associations to strengthen the relationship between veterinary medicine and public health.

For Additional Program Information Contact

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